



The standards in this strand are mostly a continuation of standards from earlier grade levels. Students are expected to apply their command of writing conventions as they compose increasingly more complex and sophisticated text.

By the tenth grade, students should have developed an understanding of the basic aspects of appropriate sentence structure in English, including the use of main and subordinate clauses to show the relationship among ideas, the use of parallel structure in phrases and clauses, and the proper placement of modifiers.

Students should also be able to demonstrate the ability to follow the conventions of standard English for punctuation, including the use of quotation marks, commas, italics, semicolons, colons, ellipses, and hyphens.

Students should be able to recognize correct agreement between subjects and verbs, correct agreement between pronouns and their antecedents, and appropriate use of nouns and pronouns. Students should also be able to use correct pronouns for the objects of prepositions.

### In the Classroom

As a piece of writing enters the final stages of the writing process, students must focus attention on eliminating errors with the eye of a critical reader. Recognizing errors in writing is an important skill to be learned. The most difficult task is editing for the types of errors or stylistic problems that may become habitual in a student's writing. This strand focuses on the attention that is needed to identify and correct common errors in a student's work.

Students should be able to show control of:

- Sentence and paragraph structure, including main and subordinate clauses, phrases, parallel structure, consistency of verb tenses, and placement of modifiers
- Punctuation, including semicolons, colons, ellipses, and hyphens
- Grammar, usage, diction, and syntax

### **On the CAHSEE**

The California academic content standards at every grade level emphasize the importance of the conventions of standard written English, and questions on the CAHSEE reflect this emphasis. There are three main areas of focus: sentence structure, punctuation, and grammar and usage.

The following pages discuss the three academic content standards in Writing Conventions on the CAHSEE.

## Writing Conventions

Standard 10WC1.1

Identify and correctly use clauses (e.g., main and subordinate), phrases (e.g., gerund, infinitive, and participial), and mechanics of punctuation (e.g., semicolons, colons, ellipses, hyphens).

5 test questions

Choose the answer that is the **MOST** effective substitute for the underlined part of the sentence. If no substitution is necessary, choose “Leave as is.”

The Alaskan rivers are clear and sparkling in summer however, they are frozen in winter.

- A in summer, however they are frozen in winter.
- B in summer; however, they are frozen in winter.
- C summer: however they are frozen in winter.
- D Leave as is.

CAHSEE questions for standard 10WC1.1 focus on sentence structure and punctuation. Some questions may require students to identify the appropriate use of coordination and subordination to express the relationship among ideas, the correct use of coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, and the appropriate use of participial, infinitive, and gerund phrases. CAHSEE questions for standard 10WC1.1 also may focus on the conventions for punctuation in standard written English. Questions for standard 10WC1.1 may require students to identify the correct use of the punctuation marks named in the standard: semicolons, colons, ellipses, and hyphens. Because several other forms of punctuation are addressed by the academic content standards in earlier grades, other CAHSEE questions will assess these forms, including quotation marks for direct quotations and for titles; commas with introductory phrases, direct address, and compound sentences; and italics for titles. Questions for standard 10WC1.1 may be based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing, or they may be stand-alone items (not based on a passage).

The sample question requires knowledge of the use of the semicolon with a transitional adverb. Students should understand both of the conventions employed here, the use of the semicolon to join two independent and closely related clauses and the use of the comma after transitional adverbs such as *however*. Both conventions are correctly used in choice B. The other choices represent potential student errors: Choice A has a comma splice; choice C has an incorrect use of the colon with no comma after *however*; and choice D is a run-on sentence with incorrect use of punctuation.

**Writing Conventions**

Standard **10WC1.2**  
**Understand sentence construction**  
 (e.g., parallel structure,  
 subordination, proper placement  
 of modifiers) and proper English  
 usage (e.g., consistency of verb  
 tenses).

**5 test questions**

**Choose the answer that is the  
 MOST effective substitute for the  
 underlined part of the sentence.  
 If no substitution is necessary,  
 choose “Leave as is.”**

**Responsibilities of the job include  
greeting customers, escorting them to  
 a table, and offering beverages.**

- A** greeting customers, escort them to a table and offering a beverage.
- B** to greet customers, escorting them to tables and offering a beverage.
- C** to greet customers, escorting them to a table, and to offer a beverage.
- D** Leave as is.

CAHSEE questions for standard 10WC1.2 focus on parallel structure, placement of modifiers, and consistency of verb tense.

The sample question focuses on the use of parallel structure in a series. The correct answer, choice D, uses three parallel gerund phrases. The other choices offer nonparallel phrases and represent potential student errors.

**Writing Conventions**Standard **10WC1.3**

**Demonstrate an understanding of proper English usage and control of grammar, paragraph and sentence structure, diction, and syntax.**

**5 test questions**

**Choose the word or phrase that best completes the sentence.**

**The musician played Wendy's favorite waltz for her husband and \_\_\_\_\_.**

- A** I
- B** he
- C** she
- D** her

CAHSEE questions for standard 10WC1.3 may require students to understand the correct use of the conventions of English grammar and usage. Students should recognize correct agreement between subjects and verbs and between pronouns and antecedents. Correct use of nouns and pronouns is also tested, as well as the correct use of pronouns as the object of a preposition. Questions may also address other problems in student writing, including verb tense, commonly confused homonyms, common usage errors (e.g., affect/effect, except/accept), and the use of adverbs and adjectives. Questions may be based on passages that represent rough drafts of typical student writing, or they may be stand-alone items (not based on a passage).

The sample question focuses on the case of a pronoun used as the object of a preposition. The question reflects a common student error, using the nominative rather than the objective case with a compound object of a preposition. Students should understand that the correct choice is D. It is the one that would be used if the object were simple rather than compound (i.e., "for her").